

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1577

To create a Department of Defense-wide program of patient navigators for wounded members of the Armed Forces.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 20, 2007

Mr. SHAYS (for himself, Mr. BUCHANAN, and Mr. BILIRAKIS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To create a Department of Defense-wide program of patient navigators for wounded members of the Armed Forces.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Wounded Warriors
5 Joint Health Care Patient Navigators Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE-**
2 **WIDE PATIENT NAVIGATOR PROGRAM FOR**
3 **WOUNDED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED**
4 **FORCES.**

5 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Defense
6 shall establish a Department of Defense-wide patient navi-
7 gator program and assign the responsibility for overseeing
8 the program to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for
9 Health Affairs.

10 (b) **FUNCTION.**—Under the program, patient naviga-
11 tors shall be assigned as representatives to medical hold-
12 over patients and their families in order to improve health
13 care outcomes.

14 (c) **QUALIFICATIONS OF PATIENT NAVIGATORS.**—To
15 qualify as a patient navigator, a person shall successfully
16 undergo extensive and regular training on all medical and
17 administrative processes within the medical holdover sys-
18 tem of the Department of Defense and specifically within
19 the military installation to which the navigator is assigned.
20 A person acting as a patient navigator may not be a mem-
21 ber of the Armed Forces or an employee of the Depart-
22 ment of Defense. The Secretary of Defense shall enter into
23 contracts to acquire the services of patient navigators.

24 (d) **NUMBER OF PATIENT NAVIGATORS.**—Under the
25 program, there shall be a standard number of patient
26 navigators at any military medical treatment facility or

1 other medical retention facility, with the ratio of naviga-
2 tors to patients no higher than 1 to 10.

3 (e) AUTHORITIES OF PATIENT NAVIGATORS.—Under
4 the program, the Secretary of Defense shall ensure that
5 patient navigators—

6 (1) are allowed scheduled daily access to senior
7 decision-making personnel and offices within the fa-
8 cility or military installation to which assigned;

9 (2) are informed of all corrective actions taken
10 on behalf of the patients they represent in a timely,
11 standardized manner; and

12 (3) are allowed access to patient medical sched-
13 uling information and allowed to assist in scheduling
14 appointments in a timely fashion.

15 (f) RESPONSIBILITIES OF PATIENT NAVIGATORS.—
16 Under the program, each patient navigator shall—

17 (1) report in writing daily to the commander or
18 director of the facility or military installation to
19 which the navigator is assigned all patient and fam-
20 ily concerns, issues, and complaints; and

21 (2) keep confidential all files, and have con-
22 tracts with each patient acknowledging privacy and
23 other patient concerns about the role of the navi-
24 gator.

1 (g) MEDICAL HOLDOVER PATIENT.—In this Act, the
2 term “medical holdover patient” means a member of the
3 Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard
4 or other reserve component, who is undergoing medical
5 treatment, recuperation, or therapy, or is otherwise in
6 medical hold or holdover status, for an injury, illness, or
7 disease incurred or aggravated while on active duty in the
8 Armed Forces.

9 (h) AUTHORIZATION.—There is authorized to be ap-
10 propriated to carry out this Act \$3,000,000 for each of
11 fiscal years 2007, 2008, and 2009.

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